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Abstract of the national paper of the Syrian Arab Republic

1. The Syrian Arab Republic, since its establishment of the General Organization of Remote Sensing in 1986, has participated in the activities of the Office for Outer Space Affairs of the Secretariat. The General Organization of Remote Sensing participated in symposia and workshops organized by the Office in Austria, China, Norway and other countries, as well as in the Regional Preparatory Conference for the Third United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space for Africa and the Middle East, held in Rabat from 26 to 30 October 1998.

2. The General Organization of Remote Sensing has always benefited from its cooperation with United Nations bodies in the applications of remote sensing and other related techniques, such as the Geographic Information System, in particular in the development of projects designed to promote economic and social development.

3. Various application studies and development projects involving the use of remote sensing and satellite data have already been implemented, with the following results:

(a) Satellite images were interpreted and successfully used to study the groundwater in different parts of the Syrian Arab Republic, including the coastal area and the southern and interior regions of the country;

(b) A field study of the land and forests of the coastal area, a study of desertification in the north-eastern region, a number of regional organizational schemes for the southern and coastal areas and organizational schemes for cities like Damascus and Aleppo have been produced;

(c) A study for the evaluation of the natural resources of the Abdel-Aziz Mountain in the north-eastern region has been designed;

(d) Detailed geo-ecological maps for the region and countryside of Damascus and for the southern region have been produced, and thermal remote sensing has been used to scan the Syrian coast to identify fresh-water leakage to the sea and study coastal pollution;

(e) An advanced space atlas for the Syrian Arab Republic has been produced, and a scientific magazine about remote sensing techniques and space research is issued regularly.

4. Work is under way to produce thematic digital maps for selected important areas in the Syrian Arab Republic, with a view to continuing the exploration for mineral, oil, gas and other natural resources.

5. The General Organization of Remote Sensing hoped that the Third United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, in view of its emphasis on new directions for the future and of the great importance attached to its outcome, would draw up a specific, objective and realistic programme whereby:

(a) Effective international cooperation in the use of space and remote sensing technology would be promoted;

(b) Developed countries that possess advanced space technology and know-how would assist developing countries through the sharing of such technology. The globalization of space technology would therefore be based on mutual cooperation, free of hegemony, and on the recognition that genuine human progress will require the control and use of the Earth's resources for the good of humanity as a whole.
